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WATCHET URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL  
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH  
REPORT 1957

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I will begin with the vital statistics for 1957:

There were 41 births and 28 deaths during the year with 1 infant mortality below the age of 1 year. Watchet death rate was 9.95 being 8th amongst Somerset Urban Districts, Street being lowest with 8.01 and Chard highest with 13.16. The Birthrate was 16.82, placing us 6th in the Somerset Urban Districts, these above being Shepton Mallet, Portishead, Norton Radstock, Keynsham and Ilminster. The National Rate was 16.6 so we are just about breaking even on this score. We are 1.70 per 1,000 above the Somerset average for births and 0.58 per 1,000 below the average rate for deaths.

The average age at death was, men 72 and women 74 thus showing that last years trend has been reversed when the average ages were 72 and 69 respectively. There were 5 males over 80, 3 over 70, 2 over 60, 1 over 50 and 1 over 30. 1 woman over 90, 4 over 80, 4 over 70, 4 over 60 and 1 over 50, also 1 death under 1 year.

The causes of death included 11 cases due to circulatory disorders, 3 due to other heart diseases and 3 other circulatory disease, 2 due to gastritis and enteritis, 1 lung cancer, 1 hypertension, 3 other malignant causes and 1 suicide. In spite of an influenza epidemic during the year I am glad to report there were no deaths from it.

There were no deaths from Tuberculosis and no new notifications.

With regard to vaccinations, there were 31 primary and 11 re-vaccinations. Remember there were 41 births, of these only 14 were vaccinated; of the others 1 was over 1 year, 2 between 2 to 4 years, 10 between 5 and 14 years with 4 re-vaccinations, and 4 over 14 years with 7 re-vaccinations. Most of the vaccinations over the age of 1 year were due to families travelling abroad as emigrants; hence the figure of 14 vaccinations in children under 1 year is a poor one. We have become complacent about smallpox. If parents could only see a case of this disease they would not hesitate to have their children vaccinated.

Diphtheria and Whooping cough immunisation shows a more satisfactory figure; 28 children under 1 year were immunised, 9 between 1 and 4 years, one between 5 and 14, with 24 booster doses for those already immunised. There are no figures to show how many of these were carried out with combined Dip Pert Tet and how many with separate injections as suggested by the Minister of Health. I suspect most were done with combined vaccine during the winter months when the risks of Polio following injections are negligible.

There were no poliomyelitis vaccinations during 1957 carried out in Watchet, there being only 1 other Urban District in Somerset in the same position. In fairness, only 1,066 children in the whole county were vaccinated in this year.

Notifications of Infectious diseases showed only 8 cases of measles and 4 of pneumonia, with no cases of Poliomyelitis.

The Watchet Waterworks Company once again supplied us with water that was bacteriologically clear.

Ice cream samples for contamination were again very satisfactory.

Caravan sites produced no health problems, port activities likewise, though several members of ship's crews were seen during the

influenza/



influenza epidemic in the autumn of 1957.

There is little that I can add to the reports on housing that you have had from the Surveyor, I noticed that there were one or two cases of overcrowding.

My thanks are due to the District Nurses, the Public Health Inspector, Mr. Eiden for his advice and assistance and all those voluntary organisations who contribute so much to the health and welfare of the general public.

Medical Officer of Health for the Watchet Urban District.

30th October, 1958.

